

Minutes of June 3, 2002 ABAC meeting.

Voting members present: Jack Johnson, Scott Smith, Ted Packard, Ron Sender, Christopher Tonkin and Stephan Miller.

Others present: Pete Howard, Joey Glushko, Paul Marinelli, Ron Feldman, Doug Greenfield and Mark Streiffeld.

The meeting was called to order at 7:31pm.

The minutes for May 6 were accepted with a single correction.

Correspondence. Jack noted that the Committee received correspondence from the conservation commission. The subject of the letter was the request by Mal's Servicer to expand operations at the Mass. Ave. site.

Bike Rodeo. We first discussed the Bike Rodeo (police safety day) which took place in Arlington last weekend. ABAC was not asked to participate. Ron suggested that if we want to participate next year we should be proactive in finding out more about the event and when it will be held.

Report on Transportation Committee. Several selectmen attended the last meeting. It was revealed that towns like Arlington can apply for funding from Mass Highway to be used for transportation infrastructure. Other topics discussed were the volume of traffic in town general and cut through traffic in particular. Also it was noted that improving traffic flow at the Alewife intersection could have far reaching effects in ameliorating traffic throughout Arlington.

Bikeway Issues. Work on repaving the bikeway has started albeit slowly. Paulo mentioned the fence along the path behind the Spy Pond Apartments and wondered if it encroached on the path. We asked Joey to look at the site plans of the path and try and determine whether the fence is too near the path. Christopher mentioned the small pocket park which has appeared on the path near Gold's Gym. No one knows who is responsible but the gravel that was installed is washing onto the path.

Warrant Article. Joey suggested that we should wait until some future Town Meeting so that we will have some time to do some public relations. Two TM members were present (Pete and Mark) and they both thought that the article and its presentation were confusing. We decided that we should take advantage of the time to lobby some of the local merchants to speak in favor of the article. The merchants were against it because of the fear that they would lose auto parking in favor of bicycle parking. Pete added that there was actually no support from any quarter at the TM. Jack advised throwing out the current article and writing a simpler version which suggests the consideration of bicycle parking during the planning phase of a development. Jack will work with Joey and the town Planning Department to rewrite the article. Ron said that we ought to consider showing the completed article to a group of TM members for suggestions. Pete suggested that we run it by the Finance Committee as a forum for pre-evaluation.

Mass. Ave. Redesign. We spent the remainder of the evening discussing the what our position should be on Mass. Ave. redesign in East Arlington. Scott gave a brief preamble and reminded us that he has taken on the task of soliciting public input. The next public meeting will be on the evening of July 10 at the Fox Branch Library. There will be additional meetings later in the fall. In the short term the reconstruction will amount to possibly paving and paint. In the longer term bulb outs and/or median construction could be contemplated.

Jack polled our opinions with the following result.

Christopher would like to see bike lanes. He feels that they will encourage biking.

Stephan would prefer a wide travel lane and feels safer without bike lanes although he would go along with our recommending them.

Ron F. prefers bike lanes with strict enforcement of no parking in the lanes and other egregious behavior.

Ron S. suggested widening the parking lane (as in Arlington Heights) and feels that bike lanes lure people into a false sense of security. Education will be necessary to make bike lanes a safe alternative.

Pete felt that bike lanes will be a hard sell so close to the bike path and is happy with the current configuration.

Joey likes distinct bike lanes because they favor the safety of the casual cyclist who wants to stop in the area rather than travel through it.

Doug also wants bike lanes plus a buffer zone between parked cars and the bike lane. If we have bike lanes, we should make it possible to ride as far away from the door zone as possible.

Mark agreed with Doug.

Ted values two through lanes in either direction. He is happy to ride in travel lanes. Bike lanes encourage bikes to pass on the right.

Jack said that four lanes are dangerous for pedestrians and favors one travel lane in either direction. In addition, he slightly favors bike lanes. He thinks that they give a message that bikes belong.

Scott also suggested making the parking lane wider to allow room for bikes. We must that there is a priority to make the design work for all modes of transport and lastly reminded us that bike lanes can also serve to calm traffic.

Scott summarized that the sense of the group seems to be for one travel lane in either direction with bike lanes and strict enforcement.

The last order of business was to plan an ABAC dinner at Redbone's on the evening of June 24. RSVP to Jack before that date.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34pm.